

THE  
D U T Y  
A N D  
P L E A S U R E  
O F  
P R A I S E  
A N D  
T H A N K S G I V I N G .

By HENRY SCOUGAL, A.M.  
Author of a Book intituled,  
*The LIFE of GOD in the SOUL of Man.*

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T H E

# DUTY and PLEASURE

O F

## *Praise and Thanksgiving.*

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PSALM CVII. 15.

*O that men would praise the LORD for  
his goodness, and for his wonderful  
works to the children of men.*

❖ ❖ ❖ **H**ERE is scarce any Duty of Re-  
ligion more commonly neglected,  
or more slightly performed, than  
that of Praise and Thanksgiving.  
❖ ❖ ❖ **T**he Sense of our Wants puts us  
upon begging Favours from GOD, and the  
Consciousness of our Sins constrains us to de-  
precate his Wrath; thus Interest and Self-  
love send us to our Prayers. But alas! how  
small a Part bath an ingenuous Gratitude in  
our

our Devotion? How seldom are we serious and hearty in our Acknowledgements of the divine Bounty? The slender Returns of this Nature which we make, are many Times a formal Ceremony, a Preface to usher in our Petitions for what we want, rather than any sincere Expression of our thankful Acknowledgement for what we have received. Far different was the Temper of the holy Psalmist, whose affectionate Acknowledgements of the Goodness and Bounty of God, in the chearful Celebration of his Praise, make up a considerable Part of his divine and ravishing Songs. How often do we find him exciting and disposing himself to join Voice, and Hand, and Heart together in this holy and delightful Employment? (a) <sup>ss</sup> Bless the Lord, O my soul: <sup>ss</sup> and all that is within me, bless his holy name. <sup>ss</sup> (b) My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is <sup>ss</sup> fixed: I will sing and give praise. Awake up <sup>ss</sup> my glory, awake psaltery and harp: I myself <sup>ss</sup> will awake right early. <sup>ss</sup> And being conscious of his own insufficiency for the Work, he inviteth others unto it, calling in the whole Creation to assist him: (c) <sup>ss</sup> O sing unto the <sup>ss</sup> Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord all the <sup>ss</sup> earth. Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds <sup>ss</sup> of the people, give unto the Lord glory and <sup>ss</sup> strength. Praise (d) ye the Lord. Praise ye <sup>ss</sup> the Lord from the heavens: praise him in <sup>ss</sup> the heights, Praise him, ye sun and moon:   
praise

(a) Psal. ciii. 1.

(b) Psal. lvii. 1, 8.

(c) Psal. xcvi. 1, 7.

(d) Psal. cxlviii. 1, &amp;c.



<sup>33</sup> praise him, all ye stars of light. Moun-  
<sup>33</sup> tains and all hills, fruitful trees, and all ce-  
<sup>33</sup> dars. Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things,  
<sup>33</sup> and flying fowls. (e) Bless the Lord all  
<sup>33</sup> his works, in all places of his dominion.<sup>33</sup>  
 Many such figurative Expressions occur, and  
 Allowance must be made for the poetical  
 Strain: but in the Text we have a proper and  
 passionate wish, <sup>33</sup> O that men would praise  
<sup>33</sup> the Lord,<sup>33</sup> &c.

<sup>33</sup> O that men,<sup>33</sup> &c. Man is the great Priest  
 of this lower World, by whom all the Ho-  
 mage and Service of the other Creatures is to  
 be paid to their common Lord and Maker:  
<sup>33</sup> God (f) hath made him to have dominion  
<sup>33</sup> over the works of his hands: he has put all  
<sup>33</sup> things under his feet. All sheep and oxen;  
<sup>33</sup> yea and the beast of the field, the fowl of the  
<sup>33</sup> air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever  
<sup>33</sup> passeth through the paths of the seas.<sup>33</sup> And  
 the divine Bounty in maintaining of these poor  
 Creatures redoundeth unto him; and therefore  
 it is highly reasonable that he should pay the  
 Tribute of praise for them, who are not capa-  
 ble to know their Dependence on God, or  
 their Obligations unto him. (g) <sup>33</sup> The  
<sup>33</sup> young lions are said to roar, and seek their  
<sup>33</sup> meat from God. (b) The young ravens do  
<sup>33</sup> cry unto him.<sup>33</sup> But these are only the Com-  
 plaints of languishing Nature, heard and re-  
 lieved by the God of Nature; but not directly

A 3

and

(e) Psal. ciii. 22.

(f) Psal. viii. 6, &c.

(g) Psal. civ. 21.

(b) Job. xxxviii. 41.

and particularly addressed to him. Man alone is capable to entertain Communion with God, to know his Goodness, and to celebrate his Praise.

<sup>ss</sup> O that men would praise the Lord.<sup>ss</sup> Praise is the Acknowledgment of the Goodness and Excellency of a Person; and though the Desire of it in us, who have nothing of our own but Folly and Sin, and whose best Performances have a miserable Alloy of adherent Corruption, be a blameable Vanity and Presumption; yet certainly it is highly reasonable for God, who is the Author and Fountain of all Good, to require and expect it from his Creatures. He hath made this great World as a Temple for his Honour, and it should continually resound with his Praise. It is true, all the Praises of Men and Angels can add nothing to his Happiness and Glory; yet there is a Fitness and Congruity in the Thing, and it is our Happiness as well as our Duty to perform it; for (i) <sup>ss</sup> it is good to sing praises to our God; <sup>ss</sup> for it is pleasant, and praise is comely.<sup>ss</sup> This is the blessed Employment of the holy Ones above; and if we ever taste the Pleasures of Heaven upon Earth, it is then, when our Souls are ravished with an overflowing Sense of the divine Goodness, and our Mouths are filled with his Praise.

<sup>ss</sup> O that men would praise the LORD <sup>ss</sup> for his goodness.<sup>ss</sup> All the Attributes of God deserve our highest Praise; Power, Wisdom,

(i) Psal. clxvii. 1.

of PRAISE and THANKSGIVING. 7

dom and Goodness, are all one in him; but as we have different Conceptions of these, Goodness is that lovely Attribute which doth peculiarly attract our Affection, and excite our Praise. Our Love to God doth not so much flow from the Consideration of his Greatness, whereby he can do whatever he will, as from the Consideration of his Goodness, that he always willeth what is best; that his almighty Power hath infinite Wisdom to regulate it, and unspeakable Bounty to actuate and exert it.

<sup>ss</sup> O that men would praise the LORD for  
<sup>ss</sup> his goodness, and for his wonderful works  
<sup>ss</sup> to the children of men.<sup>ss</sup> The divine Goodness doth spread and extend itself over all the Parts of the Universe, and embraceth the whole Creation in its Arms: It not only displayeth itself most illustriously to the blessed Inhabitants of the regions above, but reacheth also to the meanest Worm that crawleth on the Ground. The Beasts of the Field, and the Fowls of the Air, and the Fishes of the Sea, and the innumerable Swarms of little Insects, which we can hardly discern with our Eyes, are all Subjects of that almighty Care: By Him they are brought forth into the World; by Him they are furnished with Provision suitable for them:  
<sup>ss</sup> These (*k*) all wait upon thee,<sup>ss</sup> says the Psalmist, <sup>ss</sup> that thou mayest give them their  
<sup>ss</sup> meat in due season; that thou givest them  
<sup>ss</sup> they gather: Thou openest thy hand,  
A 4 <sup>ss</sup> they

(*k*) Psal civ. 27.

<sup>33</sup> they are filled with good.<sup>33</sup> But here, to excite us to Thankfulness, he makes Choice of an Instance, wherein we ourselves are more nearly concerned, and exhorteth to <sup>33</sup> praise the Lord for his wonderful works to <sup>33</sup> the children of men.<sup>33</sup> If the Goodness of God to the holy Angels be above our Reach, and his Bounty to the inferior Creatures be below our Notice, yet sure we must be infinitely dull if we do not observe his Dealings with ourselves, and those of our Kind. As our Interest maketh us more sensible of this, so Gratitude doth oblige us to a more particular Acknowledgment of it.

Thus you have the Meaning and Importance of the Text. I know not how we can better employ the rest of the Time, than by suggesting to your Meditations particular Instances of this Goodness, and of <sup>33</sup> his wonderful works to the children of men.<sup>33</sup> Let us then reflect on the Works both of Creation and Providence; let us consider in what a goodly and well furnished World he hath placed us; how <sup>33</sup> he hath stretched out the <sup>33</sup> heavens as a curtain over our heads, and <sup>33</sup> therein hath set a tabernacle for the sun,<sup>33</sup> which, as a universal Lamp, enlightneth all the Inhabitants of the Earth; <sup>33</sup> his going <sup>33</sup> forth is from the end of the heaven, his <sup>33</sup> circuit to the ends thereof, and there is no <sup>33</sup> thing hid from his heat:<sup>33</sup> In the Morning he ariseth, and makes the Darkness flee before him, and discovereth all the Beauty and Lustre

Lustre of Things; and truly <sup>33</sup> the light is  
<sup>33</sup> sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes  
<sup>33</sup> to behold the sun.<sup>33</sup> Nor is it less useful and  
 advantageous for directing our Ways, and or-  
 dering our several Employments: (l) <sup>33</sup> Man  
<sup>33</sup> goeth forth to his work, and to his labour  
<sup>33</sup> until the evening. He maketh darkness,  
<sup>33</sup> and it is night:<sup>33</sup> The Curtains are drawn,  
 and all Things hush into Silence, that Man  
 may enjoy the more quiet Repose; and yet,  
 to lessen the Horror of Darkness, and lighten  
 such as are obliged to travel in the Night,  
 while the Sun is enlightening another Part of  
 the World, we have the Moon and Stars to  
 supply his Room. <sup>33</sup> O give thanks unto  
<sup>33</sup> the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy  
<sup>33</sup> endureth for ever. To him that by wis-  
<sup>33</sup> dom made the heavens: for his, &c. The  
<sup>33</sup> moon and stars to rule by night: for his,  
<sup>33</sup> &c.<sup>33</sup>

Again, how wonderfully hath he furnished  
 this lower world for our Maintenance and Ac-  
 commodation! (m) <sup>33</sup> The heavens, even the  
<sup>33</sup> heaven of heavens are the LORD's, but the  
<sup>33</sup> earth hath he given to the children of men.  
 (n) He hath made us to have dominion  
<sup>33</sup> over all the works of his hands; he hath  
<sup>33</sup> put all things under our feet; all sheep and  
<sup>33</sup> oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the  
<sup>33</sup> fowls of the air, the fish of the sea, and  
<sup>33</sup> whatsoever passeth through the paths of the  
<sup>33</sup> sea.<sup>33</sup>

A 5

(l) Psal. civ. 23.

(m) Psal. cxv. 16.

(n) Psal. viii. 6, 7, 8.



“ sea.” By the Art and Industry of Man the swiftest fowls are caught, the fiercest Creatures are tamed, the strongest Beasts are overcome, and all made serviceable unto him. The Horse helpeth our Journey both with Speed and Ease; the Oxen labour the Ground for us; Sheep afford us Meat and Cloaths; from the Bowels of the Earth we dig Fuel, Metals, and Stones, which are still the more plentiful, as they are useful and advantageous to us; those Stones which serve for building are almost every where ready at Hand, whereas Rubies and Diamonds, and other such glittering Trifles, are found but in a few Places of the World, and gotten with a great deal of Toil; and to what Hardship should all Sorts of Artificers be put, if Iron was as scanty as Gold? The Surface of the Earth yieldeth “ Grass for the Cattle, and Herb for the Ser-  
“ vice of Man, and Wine that maketh glad  
“ the heart of Man, and Bread that strength-  
“ eneth Man’s heart.” These it affordeth unto us from Time to Time; and while we are spending the Productions of one Year, God is providing for us against another. There is no small Variety of Seasons and Influences, which concur for the Production of that Corn, which we murmur so much for when we want, and value so little when it doth abound. The winter Cold must temper and prepare the Earth; the gentle Spring must cherish and ferment the Seed; Vapors must be raised and condensed into Clouds, and then squeezed out and sifted into little Drops, to water and



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refresh the Ground; and then the Summer-Heat must ripen and digest the Corn before it be fit to be cut down: (o) <sup>33</sup> Thou visitest the <sup>33</sup> earth, <sup>33</sup> saith the Psalmist, <sup>33</sup> and waterest <sup>33</sup> it, thou greatly enrichest it with the River <sup>33</sup> of God, which is full of Water; thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it: Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly, thou settlest the furrows thereof, thou makest it soft with showers, thou bledest the springing thereof, thou crownest the year with thy goodness, and all thy paths drop fatness; they drop upon the pastures of the wilderness, and the little hills rejoice on every side; the pastures are cloathed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.

<sup>33</sup> O LORD, how wonderful are thy works! <sup>33</sup> in wisdom hast thou made them all, the <sup>33</sup> earth is full of thy riches. So is the great <sup>33</sup> and wide sea, wherein are creeping things <sup>33</sup> innumerable, both small and great fishes. <sup>33</sup> There go the ships, <sup>33</sup> those great Engines of Traffic and Commerce, whereby every Country is easily furnished with the Productions of another. And indeed, it is a wonderful and astonishing Contrivance of Nature, that Men should be easily transported to the remotest Places in such floating Houses, and carried, so to speak, upon the Wings of the Wind; that they should be able to find out  
their

their Way in the widest Ocean and darkeſt Night, by the Direction of a trembling Needle, and the unaccountable Influence of a ſorry Stone. (p) " They that go down  
 33 to the ſea in ſhips, that do buſineſs in great  
 33 waters; theſe ſee the works of the LORD,  
 33 and his wonders in the deep. For he  
 33 commandeth, and raiſeth the ſtormy wind,  
 33 which liſteth up the waves thereof: They  
 33 mount up to the heaven, they go down  
 33 again to the deep, their ſoul is melted be-  
 33 cauſe of trouble; they reel to and fro, and  
 33 ſtagger like a drunken man, and are at  
 33 their wits end. Then they cry unto the  
 33 LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth  
 33 them out of their diſtreſſes: He maketh  
 33 the ſtorm a calm, ſo that the waves thereof  
 33 are ſtill. Then they are glad, becauſe they  
 33 are quiet: ſo he bringeth them to their de-  
 33 ſired haven. O that men," &c.

But now we are fallen unawares from the Works of Creation to thoſe of Providence. Indeed it is hard to keep any exact Method in a Subject ſo copious, where one Thing doth obtrude itſelf upon us, before we have done with another. Let us all call back our Thoughts to a more orderly Conſideration of that bountiful Providence which followeth us from Time to Time. We are infinitely indebted to the divine Goodneſs before we ſee the Light of the World. (q) " He  
 33 poureth us out as milk, and curdleth us like  
 33 cheeſe.

(p) Pſal. cvii. 23.

(q) Job x. 10.

cheese. He cloaths us with skin and flesh,  
 and fenceth us with bones and sinews. He  
 granteth us life and favour, and his visita-  
 tion preserveth our spirit." This is so en-  
 tirely the Work of GOD, that the Parents  
 do not so much as understand how it is per-  
 formed; for "who knoweth the way of the  
 Spirit," how it cometh to enliven a Piece  
 of Matter, "or how the bones do grow in the  
 womb of her that is with child? I (r) will  
 praise thee," saith the Psalmist, "for I am  
 fearfully and wonderfully made; marvel-  
 lous are thy works, and that my soul know-  
 eth right well. My substance was not hid  
 from thee, when I was made in secret, and  
 curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the  
 earth. Thine eyes did see my substance,  
 yet being imperfect; and in thy book were  
 all my members written, which in conti-  
 nuance were fashioned, when as yet there  
 was none of them. How precious also are  
 thy thoughts unto me, O GOD, how great  
 is the sum of them!" &c. Nine Months  
 ordinarily pass in the forming of this curious  
 and wonderful Piece, before it be exposed to  
 the View of the World; and then the Pri-  
 soner is released from that narrow Confine-  
 ment, and the Mother and the Child are de-  
 livered together. The Mother "forgetteth  
 her Anguish and Pangs, for joy that a man-  
 child is born into the world;" the poor In-  
 fant is naked and weak, ready to expire  
 for

for Hunger and Cold, unable to do any Thing for itself but weep and cry : But He that brought it into the World, hath already provided for its Sustainment in it ; the Mother's Breasts are filled with a wholesome and delicious Liquor, which faileth not from Time to Time, but is invisibly supplied, like the Widow of *Sarepta's* Oil, till the Child becomes capable of stronger Food.

But it was not enough that Mothers should be enabled to sustain their Infants, unless they had been also powerfully inclined unto it ; and therefore *G o d* hath implanted those Bowels of Kindness and Compassion, which prompts them to the most tender and affectionate Care, and makes them as ready to help their Childrens Necessities as their own ; which though it do hardly deserve the Name of a Virtue, being common to them with the Brutes, (s) <sup>ss</sup> for even the sea-monsters draw <sup>ss</sup> out the breast, and give suck to their young ;<sup>ss</sup> yet certainly it is an Effect of the divine Wisdom, that Infants may not want those Succours which would never have been so effectually secured to them by a Law. Mean while the poor Infant is so weak, and so unable to endure the least Violence, and withal exposed to such innumerable Dangers, that the Mother's Solitude and Care would be to little Purpose, if it were not preserved by a higher and invisible Power, which watcheth for its Safety, when the Mother and Nurse  
are

(s) Lam. iv. 3.

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are fast asleep, and keeps it from being overlaid.

As we grow in Years, our Necessities multiply, and Dangers increase rather than diminish ; and we are still more and more obliged to God for the Supply of the one, and our Preservation from the other. We think, perhaps, we have now set up for ourselves, and can provide what is necessary by our own Industry, and keep ourselves out of Harm's Way ; but there cannot be a more foolish and unreasonable Thought ; there needeth but a little Consideration to undeceive us. All that we project and do for ourselves, dependeth on the Integrity of our Faculties, and the Soundness of our Reason, which is a Happiness we can never secure unto ourselves. I chose this Instance the rather, because it is a Mercy invaluable in itself, and I fear very seldom considered by us. O what an unspeakable Blessing it is, that we are preserved in our right Wits, that we are not roaring in some Bedlam, or running furiously up and down the Streets, nor have our Spirits sunk into that Silliness or Stupidity, which would make every little Child to mock and deride us ! It is possible enough that this should befall the wisest and most stedfast of us all. A Stroke on the Head, a few more Degrees of Heat in the Blood, or Agitation of the vital Spirits, were enough to do the Business ; so weak and mutable Creatures are we ; so small is the Distance betwixt a wise Man and



a Fool. Next to the Use of our Reason, how much are we indebted to the divine Goodness for our Health and Welfare? These Bodies of ours are made up of so various Parts, and withal, so nice and delicate, that the least thing in the World is enough to entangle and disorder them. A Drop of Humour, or a Grain of Sand, will sometimes occasion such Anguish and Pain, as to render a Man insensible of all the Comforts he enjoyeth in the World: And they who understand any thing of the human Body, will justly wonder that all the Parts are kept in order for an Hour. What a Mercy ought we therefore to account it, to find ourselves in Health and Vigour; no Aching in our Head, no Noisomness in our Stomach, no Fever in the Blood, none of the Humours vitiated, none of those innumerable Conduits broken which convey them; but all the Organs performing their proper Functions, and a spritely Vigour possessing every Part! How much are we indebted to that Providence which preserveth us from Falls and Bruises, and <sup>ss</sup> keepeth all our Bones, so that <sup>ss</sup> none of them are broken; <sup>ss</sup> which watcheth over us when we are asleep, and careth for us when we are not able to care for ourselves? What a Blessing is it to enjoy the Repose of the Night! that we are not wearied with endless Tossings and Rollings, nor <sup>ss</sup> scared with <sup>ss</sup> dreams, and terrified with visions, <sup>ss</sup> whereof holy *Job* complains; that we are protected  
from



from Fire and Violence ; from evil Spirits, and from evil Men. " I will both lay me  
" down in peace, and sleep, for thou, LORD,  
" that makest me to dwell in safety." And  
what shall we say of our Food and Raiment,  
of our Houses, and manifold Accommodations,  
of the Kindness of our Neighbours, and the  
Love of our Friends, of all the Means of our  
Subsistence, and all the Comforts of our Lives !  
We are made up as it were, of a great many  
several Pieces, have such a Variety of Interests  
and Enjoyments concurring to our present Hap-  
piness, that it is an unspeakable Goodness  
which continueth them all with us from Time  
to Time ; that when we awake in the Morn-  
ing, we should find our Minds clear, our  
Bodies well, our Houses safe, all our Friends  
in Health, and all our Interests secure. " He  
" is a wall of fire about us, and about all that  
" we have, by night and by day ; and his mer-  
" cies are new every morning." I cannot  
stand to speak of all those more public Mer-  
cies, the Peace and Tranquillity of Kingdoms,  
and all the happy Effects of Society and Go-  
vernment : I shall only say, that it is a signal  
Instance of the divine Wildom and Goodness  
in the Government of the World, that such a  
vast Number of Persons, only acted by Self-  
love, should all conspire for the public Interest,  
and so eminently advance one another's Wel-  
fare : that Magistrates should so willingly un-  
dergo the Trouble of Government, and that a  
heady

heady and inconsiderate Multitude should be commanded and over-awed by a single Man; certainly it can be no other but that same God, "who stilleth the noise of the waves," that can prevent or compose "the tumults of the people."

Hitherto we have considered those Instances of the divine Bounty which relate to our temporal Concerns; but sure we were made for some higher and more excellent End than to pass a few Months or Years in this World; to eat, drink, sleep, and die. God hath designed us for a more lasting and durable Life, and hath accordingly made greater Provisions for it: He taketh Care of our very Bodies, but hath an infinitely greater Regard to those spiritual and immortal Substances which he hath breathed into us. And here, in all Reason, we ought to begin with that great and fundamental Mercy, which is the Root and Spring of all his other Mercies towards the Souls of Men, I mean, the Incarnation, and the Death of his only begotten Son. But alas! where are those Affections wherewith that should be spoken and heard? Our Dulness makes me almost afraid to meddle with so high a Theme; that the eternal Son of God, the Wisdom of the Father, the Maker, and Lord of all Things, should cloath himself with the Infirmities of the human Nature, and come down from the Habitation of his Glory, and take up his Abode among the wretched

wretched and rebellious Children of Men, to reclaim them from their Wickedness and Folly, and reduce them to their Duty and their Happiness; that he should have gone up and down in the World upwards of thirty Years, in Poverty, Affliction, and Contempt; doing Good, and suffering Evil, scattering Blessings, and enduring Injuries wherever he came; and at last, should have yielded up his Life in unspeakable Anguish and Torment, to be a Propitiation for our Sins. These are Matters which ought never to be spoken or heard, without losing ourselves, as it were, in a Rapture of Admiration, Gratitude, and Love. "O the breadth, length, depth, and "height of that love which passeth all know-  
"ledge;" which made God assume our Nature, that we might become Partakers of his! It is true, all that our blessed Saviour hath done and suffered, proveth ineffectual to the greatest Part of Mankind; but sure they have themselves to blame: God hath both "said and "sworn, that he hath no pleasure in the death "of sinners, but would have them rather re-  
"pent and live;" and indeed, his Way of dealing with them, doth sufficiently declare the same: With what long-suffering Patience doth he wait for their Repentance, what Pains doth he take to reclaim them!

It is an astonishing Thing to consider, what Indignities and Affronts are every Day done unto that infinite Majesty by sinful Dust and Ashes, and that he doth not avenge himself  
by

by their total Overthrow; that they should violate his Laws, and despise his Threatnings, and defy him, as it were, unto his very Face; and yet he should pity and spare them, and wait to be gracious unto them. Were the Government of the World committed to the meekest Person on the Face of the Earth, he would never endure the Outrages which are committed against Heaven, but would presently lose all his Patience, and turn the whole Frame into Ruin: But GOD is Love: his thoughts and ways are not like those of men: but as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his thoughts and ways higher than ours. And when the obstinate Wickedness of sinful Creatures doth, as it were, force and extort Punishments from his Hands, what Reluctancy, what Unwillingness doth he express to this Work? This strange and unnatural Work, as he himself seems to term it. How shall I give thee up, O Ephraim? How shall I give thee up! O that my people had hearkened unto me: that Israel had known my ways! O Jerusalem! O Jerusalem! &c.

Again, as GOD waiteth patiently for our Reformation, so he doth make Use of many Methods and Means to bring us into it. He hath published the Gospel through the World, and brought down the Knowledge of it to our Days, in spite of all the Opposition of Devils and Men; he hath established

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a Church, and appointed a whole Order of Men, whose peculiar Calling and Business in the World is to take Care of Peoples Souls, to instruct them in the Way to Heaven, and as <sup>ss</sup> ambassadors in CHRIST's stead to be-  
<sup>ss</sup> seech them to be reconciled unto GOD.<sup>ss</sup> These are some of his common Mercies; but who can expresse that Favour and Love which he sheweth to his own, to those blessed Persons whom he chuseth, and causeth to approach unto himself; when he rescueth them from the Vanity of their Conversation, and <sup>ss</sup> that  
<sup>ss</sup> pollution which is in the world through  
<sup>ss</sup> Lust;<sup>ss</sup> when he mouldeth their Souls unto a Conformity with himself, and stampeth his blessed Image upon them; when he visiteth them with his holy Spirit, and filleth their Hearts with those hidden Pleasures, which none can understand but those that feel them:  
<sup>ss</sup> A stranger intermedleth not with their joy.<sup>ss</sup> And yet even these are but the Earnest of that great Felicity for which he hath designed us;  
<sup>ss</sup> those joys that are at his right hand, those  
<sup>ss</sup> pleasures that endure for evermore. Eye  
<sup>ss</sup> hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor can it  
<sup>ss</sup> enter into the heart of man to conceive  
<sup>ss</sup> what GOD hath prepared for those that love  
<sup>ss</sup> him: and it doth not yet appear what we  
<sup>ss</sup> shall be.<sup>ss</sup> Mean while, those small and imperfect Discoveries which are made to us in the holy Scriptures of that inconceivable Happiness, are enough to overwhelm us with Ad-  
miration



miration and Wonder. To think that the  
 blessed Day is coming, when we shall be  
 loosed from these dull and lumpish Bodies,  
 these Sinks of Corruption, Diseases and Pains,  
 these Prisons and Dungeons of our heaven-  
 born Souls, and being cloathed with Robes of  
 Light and Glory, shall get above the Clouds,  
 and all these Storms and Tempests which are  
 here below ; and be carried into those blessed  
 Regions of Calmness and Serenity, of Peace  
 and Joy, of Happiness and Security ; when we  
 shall come <sup>ss</sup> unto the innumerable Company  
<sup>ss</sup> of Angels, and the general assembly of the  
<sup>ss</sup> church of the first-born, and to the spirits  
<sup>ss</sup> of just men made perfect ; and to JESUS  
<sup>ss</sup> the mediator of the new covenant,<sup>ss</sup> there  
 to behold the Glory of GOD, and all the  
 Splendor of the Court of Heaven ; to view  
 and contemplate that infinite Power which  
 created the World, that unsearchable Wisdom  
 which ordereth all Things, that unspeakable  
 Goodness which exerteth both ; nay, (t) <sup>ss</sup> so  
<sup>ss</sup> to see GOD as to become like unto him.  
<sup>ss</sup> (u) And beholding with open face the glory  
<sup>ss</sup> of the LORD, to be changed into the same  
<sup>ss</sup> image from glory to glory.<sup>ss</sup> To receive the  
 continual Illapses of the divine Goodness, and  
 the constant Expressions of his Favour and  
 Love ; and to have our own Souls melted and  
 dissolved into the Flames of reciprocal Affec-  
 tion, and that Fire fed and nourished by unin-  
 terrupted Enjoyments ; in a Word, to be  
 continually

(t) 1 John iii. 2.

(u) 2 Cor. iv. 18.

of PRAISE and THANKSGIVING. 23

continually transported into Extasies and Raptures, and swallowed up in the Embraces of eternal Sweetness, and to be lost as it were in the Source and Fountain of Happiness and Bliss! " Lord, (x) what is man that thou takest knowledge of him? or the son of man, that thou makest such account of him? (y) What is man, that thou shouldst thus magnify him? And that thou shouldst set thine heart so much upon him? O that men would therefore praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever. Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth, and for evermore." *Amen.*

(x) Psal. cxliv. 3. (y) Job vii. 17.

F I N I S.



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